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The MEADOW FOLKS STORY HOUR

PRUDENCE GRUELLE

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THE MEADOW FOLK'S STORY HOUR

BY

PRUDENCE GRUELLE
(BLANCHE SILVER)

ILLUSTRATIONS BY
NELL HATT

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DEDICATED TO

PEGGY AND RICHIE

AND ALL LITTLE CHILDREN WHO
LOVE AND CHERISH THE
MEADOW FOLK

JUN 10 1921

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PREFACE

READING is the most essential subject that a child studies. The stories in THE MEADOW FOLK'S STORY HOUR will be sure of a hearty welcome both by teachers and pupils. They will be a never-ending source of pleasure to every normal boy and girl. These stories are told so cleverly that they have the charm of action and of dialogue in its natural form. They will prove a valuable aid to expressive reading and will provide splendid material for dramatization.

The book is designed for the early grammar grades and meets every requirement of a well-graded supplementary reader. It contains thirty-six illustrations in color, which are wonderfully adapted to the stories and which cannot fail to charm and fascinate children.

Boys and girls who have not taken excursions into the country, by rippling streams, across green meadows, and over wooded or rock-strewn hills, where

> "One day in the country
> Is worth a month in town,"

will be fascinated by the tales that the cricket, the

frog, the bumble-bee, and their fellows of the Meadow Folk have to tell.

The stories have been selected with the purpose of acquainting children with some special trait in the life of the Meadow Folk. The lessons will teach them that the animals and insects of the field are their friends — that there is a reason for their existence. There is a joy in the life lived by these companions of childhood to which most of us are blind, because of lack of appreciation of their constant labor for us. If children who read this book will learn from it that kindness to the Meadow Folk brings its reward, the author will be well repaid for her effort.

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THE MEADOW FOLK'S STORY HOUR

THE MEADOW FOLK'S STORY HOUR

No one knew why Daddy and Mamma Green Frog had invited them to their little home, down near the old mill pond. But all the meadow folk were there bright and early to hear what Daddy Green Frog had to say.

There were Johnny Grasshopper and the whole Grasshopper family; Tilly Tumble-bug and her sister, Noddy Tumble-bug; Cheery Cricket and her little cricket children; Sadie Beetle; the Beetle twins, Beetie and Reetie Beetle; Hickity, Wickity, Hoppy Toad; Billy Bumblebee; Lazy Snail; Willy Measuring Worm; Grandaddy Long Legs; Fuzzy Caterpillar; Busy Ant; Katy-did; Toppy Turtle; and Finny Perch, all looking forward to a jolly time.

Daddy Green Frog greeted his guests with a merry croak, hopped out on the highest stone, and cleared his throat.

"Friends, I have something to say which I hope you will like," he began, in a hoarse voice.

Daddy Green Frog had sung so loudly the evening before that his voice was still rough.

"I knew it!" chirped Johnny Grasshopper, in a shrill voice. "Katy-did told me."

"Katy-didn't!" exclaimed Katy-did as she settled on a weed beside Johnny Grasshopper. "Katy-didn't!"

"Well," laughed Daddy Green Frog, "it does not matter. I am glad to see you all here. As I said before —"

"Hurry! We're waiting to hear," chirped Cheery Cricket. Then feeling very much ashamed for stopping him, Cheery Cricket made an apology, and Daddy Green Frog patted her head.

"You are excused," he laughed. "That is one reason why I've asked you here this evening, to see if we could not find a way to put our time to better use. Instead of quarreling and scolding as we generally do, let's try to find something that will send us all to our beds happy. For instance, why not have a bathing party, or —"

"Not for me!" exclaimed Cheery Cricket, who hated to get her feet wet. "I would not think of a bathing party."

"Nor I," laughed Busy Ant. "Why, I cannot ever find a toadstool large enough to cover me when it rains. I know I would not enjoy a bathing party."

"Sure enough!" croaked Daddy Green Frog. "How stupid of me! Well, can any one suggest something else?"

"How would a jumping contest do?" chirped Johnny Grasshopper.

"What good will a jumping contest do me?" laughed Willy Measuring Worm.

Of course every one laughed so loudly that Daddy Green Frog rapped his drum for silence.

"I know!" said Sadie Beetle. "Let's have a story hour!"

"Who will tell the stories?" asked Hickity, Wickity, Hoppy Toad.

"Why, we will each take turns," replied Sadie Beetle. "We will have one every evening that we meet."

"Great!" said Fuzzy Caterpillar, wagging his head in glee. "I love stories."

"So do we!" cried the Grasshopper and the Cricket children. "Let's do that!"

"And suppose we call it The Meadow Folk's Story Hour," drawled Lazy Snail, who had not even moved since she crawled into the crowd.

For once in their lives the meadow folk all agreed and the question arose as to who would begin.

"Well, should I be asked," spoke up Grandaddy Long Legs, "as long as Daddy Green Frog started

the plan, we should give him the honor of starting the ball rolling."

"Where's the ball?" exclaimed Tilly Tumble-bug, waking out of a doze just in time to hear Grandaddy Long Leg's last words. Everybody giggled and Tilly Tumble-bug felt dreadfully ashamed of herself for not paying attention.

Daddy Green Frog, feeling highly honored, hopped up on the stone and cleared his throat.

"Story telling is out of my line," he laughed, "but so long as I've been asked to start, I'll do the best I can. Of course it will have to be about something that has happened to myself, for I never dreamed I would ever be asked for a story. I will do the best I can to please you," and Daddy Green Frog pulled down his green coattails and straightened his collar and began:

DADDY GREEN FROG'S TALE

"One evening, not so very long ago, I was sitting on the bank mooning myself when I heard the flutter of wings above my head. Looking up I spied old Hooty Owl eying me from a low branch in the maple tree.

"'Good evening, Daddy Green Frog,' said Hooty Owl in the silvery voice he uses when he wants to be nice. 'How are you this evening?'

"'Well,' I croaked nervously, 'not so good sitting out here,' and before he knew what I was about I jumped out on this very stone. I did not exactly mistrust him, for I know it is wrong to misjudge folks without cause, but something told me to be careful.

"Well, you should have seen that Owl blink his eyes when he saw the distance between us. My! He was angry!

"'I feel I can talk so much better when I can see myself in the water,' I laughed, trying not to let him see I was nervous.

"'I should think you would want to look at yourself to make sure that what I heard about you is not true,' he snapped out.

"'Something you heard about me?' I cried, wondering what it could be.

"'About you,' replied Hooty Owl, turning his head first to one side, then the other; 'if any one made such a remark about me, I would scratch his eyes out. Just think! Your own cousin, Hickity, Wickity, Hoppy Toad!'"

"I never said a word to Hooty Owl in my life!" interrupted Hickity, Wickity, Hoppy Toad, and every one laughed.

"Of course you didn't," said Daddy Green Frog, rapping for order.

"'Well!' said I, turning to Hooty Owl, 'what did my cousin say that was so terribly bad?'

"Hooty Owl craned his neck once more to make sure no one was listening: 'She said that when she used to play with you in the mill pond you had a tail, and that your tongue was fastened at the front of your mouth with the tip running down your throat, instead of being fastened at the back as it should be.'

"Well, folks," laughed Daddy Green Frog, "it was so very funny that I laughed until tears came into my eyes, and old Hooty Owl was almost wild, he was so angry.

"'Of all things!' he cried. 'I cannot see anything funny about that. I think it is a terrible thing to tell about any one.'

"'I am not laughing because what my cousin said struck me as being funny,' I replied; 'I am laughing at you. You, who think you know so much! Why, certainly, when I was a tadpole, which every toad and frog is before he is full-grown, I had a tail. But when my legs began to grow my tail went away. About my tongue! It is fastened at the front of my mouth, just the way it should be. Perhaps, Mr. Hooty Owl, that is why you never hear me talk about my neighbors.'

"'I don't believe you!' exclaimed Hooty Owl.

"He flew toward the stone I was sitting on, when a hawk sailed out of the sky and seized him. I ducked under the water because I heard Mamma Green Frog calling me, and that is the end of my story.

"Now please do not misunderstand me, friends. I am not saying Hooty Owl was going to eat me, but I will say I was glad to see Mr. Hawk and to hear Mamma Green Frog calling me," and Daddy Green Frog hopped down beside his wife.

. . . . . .

"Well! it was a great joke on Hooty Owl!" said Johnny Grasshopper. "A case of the hunted after the hunted."

"It certainly was a good story," chirped Cheery Cricket; "as Daddy Green Frog says, it's wrong to judge folks too quickly, but I have my doubts as to Hooty Owl. He adores Green Frogs, you know."

"Frogs and grasshoppers are favorite dishes for Hooty Owl," laughed Johnny Grasshopper. "It just reminds me of a story I would like to tell."

"Fine!" exclaimed Sadie Beetle, "let's have it!"

"Oh, not to-night," yawned Lazy Snail, "I am going to bed," and without a word she drew her head into her shell house.

"Lazy Snail is right, it is time we were all into bed," cried Grandaddy Long Legs, and he bid his host and hostess good night and went toddling off over the meadows.

The rest of the party followed, after thanking Daddy and Mamma Green Frog for the good time, and hurried home happy and contented.

The evening had passed without the usual quarrels and left them all feeling merry.

TWILIGHT NUMBER TWO

When the sun began to sink behind the hills, the next day, there was quite a hurry among the meadow folk as they wended their way down to Daddy and Mamma Green Frog's house.

Johnny Grasshopper was such a funny little fellow, they all knew his story would be a good one.

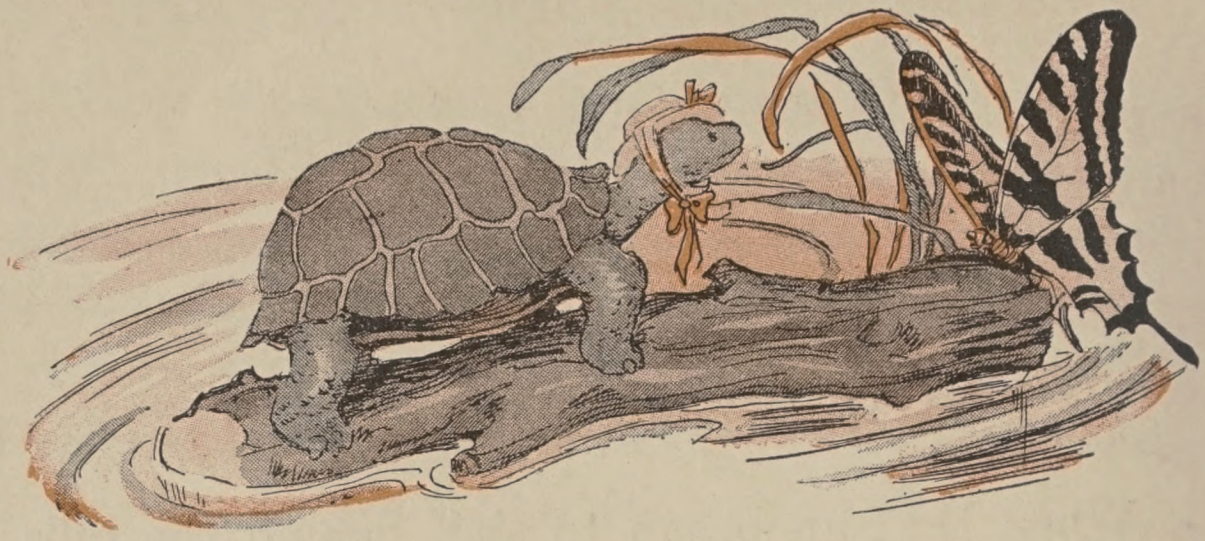
Every one was there but Hickity, Wickity, Hoppy Toad, and when she finally arrived, she was almost out of breath.

"Oh, dear," she panted, "I thought I would never get here. I —"

"Stopped to clean your teeth," yelled Katy-did, and of course everybody giggled, for it was a known fact among the meadow folk that Hickity, Wickity, Hoppy Toad did not have a tooth in her head.

Hickity, Wickity, Hoppy Toad, seeing the joke, laughed with the others.

Johnny Grasshopper, feeling very important, brushed the dust from his little gray suit, and leaning against a tall blade of grass he greeted his friends with a broad smile.



JOHNNY GRASSHOPPER'S YARN

"Down at the bottom of the river under a pile of stones there once lived a family of turtles, — Mamma and Daddy Turtle and their five good children, and one, Tilly Turtle, who was very mean and cross. She was always giving her parents cause for worry.

"Now Tilly Turtle was very unhappy and discontented with her watery home and would sit on a log hour after hour above the surface of the water watching the gay butterflies that flitted over her head, envying them their pretty wings.

"'Oh, how I wish I could fly!' she said, as a butterfly lighted on the other end of the log. 'I wish I had a pair of beautiful wings like yours!'

"'Well!' laughed the gay colored butterfly, 'all you have to do is to grow them, flap them and you can fly as I do,' and he sailed away leaving poor silly Tilly more unhappy than ever.

"She sat thinking a long time; then down she

flopped into the water to try to find out how she could grow a pair of wings.

"'Why, you foolish little girl!' cried Mamma Turtle when Tilly told her she would rather be a butterfly than a common turtle. 'You had better be happy with the blessings that you have and not try to be somebody else.'

"But as the minutes grew into hours and the hours dragged into days and no wings sprouted on Tilly's back, she became more and more unhappy.

"One day when Mamma and Daddy Turtle took the Turtle children off to the circus, Tilly refused to go and remained at home by herself.

"She was sitting on the bottom of the river feeling very sorry for herself, when in front of her dropped a hook on the end of a long line. On the end of the hook wiggled a fat worm.

"If there was one thing Tilly Turtle did love it was a worm. She eyed this little fellow greedily.

"'Oh! please do not eat me or you will sprout wings and fly away,' he cried, thinking he would frighten Tilly Turtle.

"'Sprout wings!' exclaimed Tilly Turtle.

"'Yes, indeed. You will fly so far away you will never be able to find your way back home again,' replied the wiggling worm.

"'So that is the reason Mamma and Daddy

Turtle have forbidden us to take the worms from the hooks, for fear that we will sprout wings and learn to fly. Then I will swallow you whole,' and silly Tilly Turtle opened her mouth and the wiggling worm disappeared."

"Did she fly?" asked Toppy Turtle, who had

often sat on a log and envied the butterflies and birds because they could fly.

"Fly!" laughed Johnny Grasshopper. "I should say she did. Right out of that water, through the air, and landed on the bank with such a terrible thud that it stunned her."

"And did she really have wings?" asked Cheery Cricket.

"Certainly not," laughed Johnny Grasshopper. "Who ever heard of a turtle having wings. Turtles were made to swim, not to fly. When Tilly Turtle awoke, she found herself in a big basket with other turtles, some fish, and a few crabs, and over them bent a freckle-faced boy."

"What happened then?" asked Toppy Turtle, shaking all over in excitement. Only that very afternoon he had tried to take a dangling worm from Mr. Pike's mouth. "What became of Tilly Turtle?"

"She found herself dished up in a bowl of hot soup," replied Johnny Grasshopper as he hopped down beside his friends, his story ended.

"It only goes to show," croaked Mamma Green Frog, "that Tilly Turtle's Mamma was right. Better be content with the blessings that we have than always wanting to be something other than we are."

"You are right!" agreed Cheery Cricket. "That reminds me of a story I heard about two friends of mine, and if no one has a tale ready for next time, I will be glad to tell it."

Every one was happy, and bidding Daddy and Mamma Green Frog good night, the meadow folk hurried home, just as the moon sailed high in the sky.

TWILIGHT NUMBER THREE

The next evening the moon failed to put in his appearance and the meadow folk kept close to their homes, for very few of them owned umbrellas and they did not like to get their clothes wet.

But the following evening the sun went down behind the hills like a ball of fire, and long before Mr. Moon appeared the meadow folk were knocking at Daddy and Mamma Green Frog's door.

They were all anxious to hear Cheery Cricket's story and she was just as eager to tell her tale. She greeted her friends with a merry chirp, and hopping upon a toadstool began.

CHEERY CRICKET'S STORY

Down in the woods at the roots of an old dead tree lived Creakity and Reakity Cricket with their Mamma and Daddy and their brothers and sisters. Creakity Cricket was very happy and cheerful, always looking on the bright side of everything. Reakity Cricket, her brother, was just the opposite. He was sullen and cross from morning until night.

When the cricket home became so crowded that there was no room for the new family Mamma and Daddy Cricket had found, Creakity and Reakity Cricket knew it was time they started out into the world to build homes of their own.

Mamma Cricket packed them each a little lunch in a tiny acorn basket, and kissing them good-by, wished them luck.

"Sure we will have luck," chirped Creakity Cricket with a merry laugh. "Why shouldn't we? The day is lovely."

"Well!" said her brother while gazing at the sky. "It is bright enough now, but who can tell how long it will stay that way?" and Reakity

Cricket was so busy looking for a cloud, he fell and lost his basket.

Creakity Cricket picked up her brother's basket and away they went down the road.

"Have you thought of any place you would like to live this winter?" asked Creakity Cricket, trying to cheer her brother.

"Yes, I have," said Reakity Cricket. "I shall make my home in that beautiful white farmhouse at the top of the hill. Jimmy Cockroach lives there and he said the folk are wealthy and have everything to make a cricket happy. He says there is a great fireplace in almost every room and I can have my choice."

"Oh, isn't that fine!" cried his sister. "We will be neighbors. I made up my mind a long time ago, if ever it came my turn to leave home I would try my chances in the little brown house just across from the white farmhouse."

"What! Not the old tumble-down hut just across the road?" asked Reakity Cricket. "Why, you silly child! Jimmy Cockroach says those folk are very poor."

"Being poor is no disgrace," replied Creakity Cricket. "I have always heard such nice things said about Granny Greaves. She is very good and kind to the three little orphans who live with her."

Reakity kicked the dirt with his six little feet impatiently.

"Very well, if you think you will like it. But for me, I will take the beautiful house with its wealth," and, bidding his sister good-by, Reakity Cricket hurried up the hill and crawled under the screen door and into the kitchen of the beautiful white house.

Jimmy Cockroach was glad to see him and showed him the rooms for rent above the fireplace in the kitchen.

Reakity Cricket did not exactly care for them and Jimmy Cockroach asked Gray Spider to show him the rooms in both the dining room fireplace and the living room fireplace.

Needless to say, Reakity Cricket, who thought more of show than anything else, liked the looks of the living room fireplace the best and rented the rooms at once.

By the time he had placed the furniture to suit himself, Reakity Cricket was hungry and tired.

Reakity Cricket finished his lunch and started to read the Cricket paper, when a loud noise was heard in the hall. The door flew open and in came two long-legged boys. They made such a noise that Reakity Cricket could not understand a word he was reading.

From loud talking the boys began to quarrel, and such a noise Reakity Cricket had never heard before.

Finally in ran the lady of the house and after whipping the quarreling boys sent them, howling, to bed.

Reakity Cricket gave a sigh of relief as the door closed on them, but his peace of mind lasted only a short time, for the master and mistress of the house came into the living room and sat down.

One word brought on another and before long they were fighting.

By this time Reakity Cricket was so unhappy he gathered up his things and ran down the side of the mantle to the kitchen.

"It's true," said Jimmy Cockroach sadly, shaking his head. "The folk here are not a happy family. Money does not bring happiness unless you have happiness in you."

But before Reakity Cricket could reply the cook saw him. He knew by the look on the cook's face that if she ever set her big foot on him, he would never breathe again, so he crawled under the screen door into the yard.

Reakity Cricket never stopped until he reached the tumble-down brown house where his sister lived. She was glad to see him and after he had told her his troubles, she laughed merrily and patted his head.

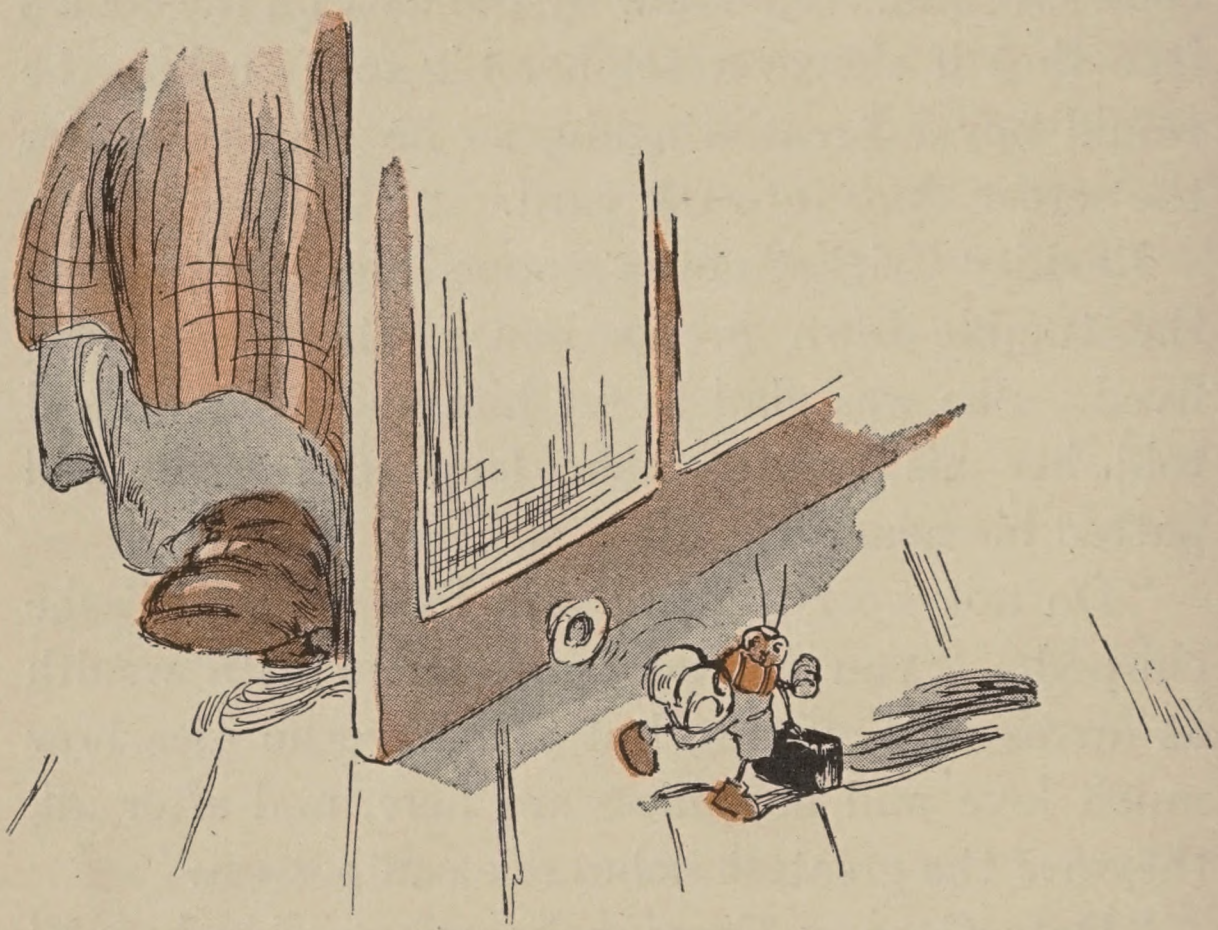
"Do not worry; come and live with me," she chirped. "You are not surrounded with wealth as far as money goes, but you have no idea how much love and happiness are here, and after all, they are the greatest riches one can possess."

"Does Granny Greaves know you live here?" asked Reakity Cricket as Granny Greaves and her three orphans came into the room. "Will she chase us away?"

"I should say not!" said his sister. "When I came in this morning, I did not know any one was here, but there sat Granny Greaves in the corner, knitting. And what do you think she told the children when they came home from school?"

Reakity Cricket shook his head and drew back in the shadows.

"She told them I was here and bid them take care not to frighten me away, as a cricket on the hearth brings good luck to the house."



"Mighty fine!" exclaimed Reakity Cricket. "But, sister, you would bring luck to any one who lived near you, because you are so cheerful. Many a time I have heard Daddy Cricket say, 'cheerfulness and luck always go hand in hand,'" and he smiled and kissed his sister. They still live in the brown house, but it is not tumbled-down any more, for good luck came to Granny

Greaves and her orphans. She built a new house and Creakity and Reakity Cricket have the most beautiful house you ever saw.

"That's a splendid story," said Daddy Green Frog, shaking Cheery Cricket's hand. "One with a great thought in it that we never should forget. Cheerfulness and luck go together."

The meadow folk all agreed it was far better to be cheerful than sad, and bidding each other good-by, they went home, each wondering who would be called upon to tell the next story.

THE FOURTH EVENING

When the next moonlight night came the meadow folk gathered by the mill pond. Every one was eager to tell a story, so Mamma Green Frog suggested they draw straws.

"Of course we have no straws," said Mamma Green Frog, "but grass will do," and hopping over to the bank she pulled some grass and let the meadow folk take their choice. "The shortest blade wins," she said, and every one laughed when Billy Bumble Bee pulled the lucky straw.

"Well," he buzzed, "I do not say I can do as well as Daddy Green Frog, Johnny Grasshopper, or Cheery Cricket, but I will do my best," and flying to a clover blossom he scratched his head with his feelers and shook the pollen from his feet.

BILLY BUMBLE BEE'S TALE

Once upon a time there lived in Beeville a family of bees. All of them were great workers, except one, Aleck Bee. He was very lazy and would sit around all day doing nothing, while his brothers and sisters helped their Mamma and Daddy.

This worried Mamma and Daddy Bee but the more they would talk to him the lazier he grew.

Aleck Bee was a lazy drone; he knew it, and he did not seem to care.

One day his sisters and brothers returned home from their work with tears in their eyes.

"Something dreadful has happened," buzzed the oldest Bee boy. "The Queen Bee has put up a sign in the village saying all drones must leave Beeville before sundown to-morrow or lose their heads."

Mamma Bee turned pale and Aleck Bee began to cry.

"No use crying now, it's too late," said Daddy Bee. "It's just what he needs to make a real bee out of him, and the sooner he learns to work the better off he will be."

Early the next morning Mamma Bee tied a slice of bread and honey in a red handkerchief for Aleck Bee and told him to be good and kind to every one he met on his way.

Aleck Bee promised and flew away from Beeville, hate raging in his heart against his Queen.

But the day was sunny and bright and Aleck soon forgot his troubles. He chased butterflies, and begged them to stop and play with him.

They were too busy and warned him about idling away his time.

He stopped to chat with the ant family, but Mamma Ant called her children away and set them to work.

"Surely every one is not busy," buzzed Aleck Bee, and flew to Miss Cricket's house. She, like her friends, the ants and butterflies, had no time for play and Aleck Bee began to grow lonesome, and wished that he might go home to his brothers and sisters once more.

This he knew could not be, so he tried to be brave and sat down on a log and ate his lunch. But as daylight began to fade, Aleck Bee grew so lonesome and homesick that he began to cry.

"Here! Here!" laughed a merry voice, and a big black ant came running from the other end of the log. "What in the world is the trouble?"

Aleck Bee wiped his eyes with his feelers and told Mr. Black Ant his troubles.

"Oh, well," laughed Mr. Black Ant, patting Aleck on the back. "No reason to weep. That will do no good. We will see what we can do," and he asked Aleck Bee to spend the night with him.

Aleck was grateful and thanked Mr. Black Ant. He picked up the tools that were on the log and carried them home for Mr. Black Ant.

It was the first time Aleck Bee had ever done a kindness for any one, but it made him feel very happy.

All next day Aleck Bee worked beside Mr. Black Ant, and when night came he flew to the meadow and brought back a bucket of fresh honey to Mamma Black Ant and her children.

It was the first day Aleck Bee had ever worked and the first time he had ever gathered honey.

He was a hungry bee that night and enjoyed his supper, because he worked for it.

One always enjoys the things he works for far more than something that is given to him.

One afternoon not long after, when Aleck Bee was in the woods after honey, he found a little bee sitting on a blade of grass crying.

He told his trouble to Aleck Bee and said that he was a drone. Aleck Bee felt sorry for the little buzzer and took him back to Black Ant's home.

Black Ant and his family welcomed the new drone bee and gave him a bed. The next day he worked with Aleck.

"I think you should start a drone-bee village, Black Ant," buzzed Aleck Bee, "for you certainly know how to make folks love to work."

It was true, for there was not a day passed that some drone bee did not stray into Black Ant's place. They soon began to call the village Droneville.

At last, one day, when word reached Droneville that two big bears were planning to tear down the old bee home, the drone bees became very unhappy. They had long ago forgiven their Queen for sending them away and wondered what they could do to help her in the time of trouble.

Black Ant, who was very proud of his family, said they should go in a body and help their Queen.

This pleased the drones and away they sailed, reaching their old home just as the two greedy bears were about to tear down the village.

That army of Drones fought with their little spears, surrounded those two bears, stung them

through their thick fur, and sent them howling into the forest.

When the Queen Bee came out to thank the army for saving her village, she was surprised and delighted to find it was made up of the drone bees she had thrown out of her court, and offered them a

place in her army. Aleck Bee and his friends, who had learned to work, accepted her offer and to-day there is not a drone bee in the village. As soon as a little bee shows signs of laziness, Aleck Bee sends him to his friend and helper, Mr. Black Ant.

Billy Bumble Bee cleared his throat and wiped his face with his feelers.

"A splendid story," drawled Lazy Snail, "one we should profit by. To succeed one must learn to love his work."

A laugh passed through the crowd, for everybody knew that Lazy Snail did not like to work, but of course no one said a word.

"It reminds me of a tale I would like to tell next time," cried Fuzzy Caterpillar, "but it is time we were on our way," and, laughing merrily, the meadow folk bid Daddy and Mamma Green Frog good night and went home in the moonlight.

THE FIFTH TWILIGHT HOUR

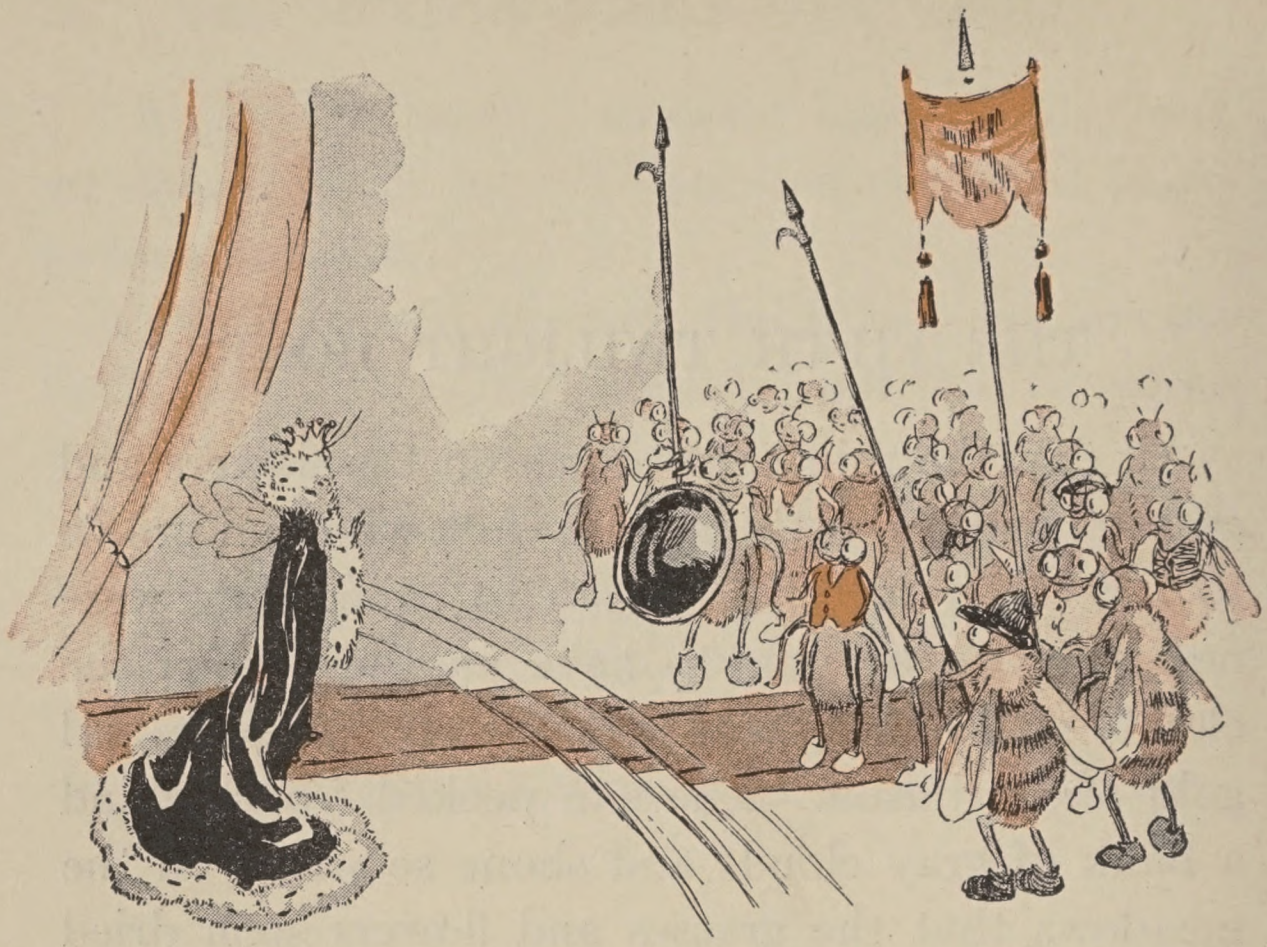
All day the rain came down on the flowers and grasses, and the little meadow folk who had grown to love their meetings began to think they were not going to be able to have another, when the clouds rolled away and left the sky all blue and gold and crimson. The sun peeked from behind a bank of gray clouds and shone so warm on the meadows that the grasses and flowers soon dried and the merry little meadow folk wended their way to Mamma and Daddy Green Frog's house.

"Well!" laughed Fuzzy Caterpillar after greeting his friends, "I thought for a while I was not going to get here."

"Nor I," said Cheery Cricket. "I must say I do not care much about hopping around in the damp grass."

"Neither do I," drawled Lazy Snail.

"That reminds me," said Fuzzy Caterpillar, "I was to tell a story to-night. I will not tell the one I had planned. This will be more fitting," and smoothing out his fuzzy suit, he began.



FUZZY CATERPILLAR'S TALE

One dark, cloudy day, down in the meadow, Woolly Worm was sitting looking up at the clouds that were sailing above his head, when over the broken twigs stepped Snippy Spider, his best friend.

"Hello there, Woolly Worm! How do you like this weather?" asked Snippy Spider.

"Not at all," said Woolly Worm.

"Nor do I," cried a third voice, and Woolly Worm and Snippy Spider turned around to find Nippy Wasp sitting by them. "It is going to rain and I am a long way from home without an umbrella."

"Either the sun burns up my web or the rain tears it down," said Snippy Spider. "It is dreadful the way things go in this meadow!"

"Indeed it is!" exclaimed Woolly Worm.

"Well," buzzed Nippy Wasp. "I hate rain

and if I had my way the sun would never go under a cloud."

"I am glad you do not have your way," replied Woolly Worm, "for I would die in this woolly suit if the sun shone all the time."

"Can you tell me of any one in this meadow who really enjoys a rainy day?" asked Snippy Spider.

"Yes, there is one!" said a fourth voice, and Willy Angle Worm poked his head up out of the dry, hot ground and greeted the three friends. "I love wet days!"

"Perhaps you would not if you had to spin a new web after every shower. You do not live in a web house, you know."

"No, I do not," replied Willy Angle Worm.

"Nor build a mud house in a tree," piped Nippy Wasp.

Willy Angle Worm laughed, and said that while he lived in a mud house he did not live in a tree.

"Well, if you had to wear a woolly suit as I do," said Woolly Worm, "you would not want it to rain and drag around in the mud. And I do not like hot days either; my suit is too heavy."

"I must say," laughed Willy Angle Worm, "I am so busy I do not have time to worry about the weather."

"I do not like very hot days, but when it is hot I do all the work I can underground in the damp earth; and when a cloudy day comes I am ready for it. I always spend cloudy days looking over my work from the outside."

"Pooh!" exclaimed Woolly Worm. "I should like to know what you can do. Why, even I cannot do very much and I am much larger than you are."

"One cannot always be judged by size," laughed Willy Angle Worm. "Precious things are done up in small packages, you know."

"Who ever heard of a worm working?" snapped Nippy Wasp.

"Who ever heard of a lazy worm," replied Willy Angle Worm, and wiggling out of his house, he hurried to his work in the garden.

The three friends watched Willy Angle Worm until he went behind a cabbage plant in the garden, then they looked at each other and wagged their heads.

"The sun never bothers me unless I begin to

think how warm it is and I never mind the rain until I get to thinking how wet it is," said Woolly Worm.

"I think," laughed Nippy Wasp, "we had better follow his advice," and bidding each other good-by, the three friends started home just as the storm broke over the meadow.

At the first ray of sunshine, Snippy Spider peeked out from her dew-covered web-house and found four little insects caught in her wires. What if she did have to mend several broken threads? There was more than enough food to pay her for the trouble, and Snippy Spider was glad that it had rained.

Nippy Wasp came out after the rain and started in to finish her little home. How much easier it was to get the damp mud to stick than the dry dirt she had been using, and before she knew it the little house was finished.

Poor Woolly Worm, who had never dared to climb a tree on a clear day for fear of being eaten by a bird, looked for a place to hang his cradle house and after making sure there was not an enemy in sight he crawled up the tree trunk and out on a long limb.

He laughed with glee as he sat there. There was not a thing to frighten him! The birds were under cover; Woolly Worm worked fast

and in a short time there hung a little cradle house.

No one ever heard the three friends complain again about life in the meadow.

Fuzzy Caterpillar stretched his long neck and slid down the blade of grass beside his host and hostess.

"A good tale," exclaimed Grandaddy Long Legs. "Only this morning I heard some folk finding fault with this meadow. But we will have to agree with Willy Angle Worm; if put to the test none of us could do any better."

"Right you are," cried Tilly Tumble-bug. "This world would be better off if each would try to make the most of himself."

"Yes, and stop fault finding. I do it myself," laughed Cheery Cricket. "It is a hard lesson to learn but it will make one happy after he has learned it."

Daddy Green Frog shook hands with his guests and jumped into the water.

TWILIGHT THE SIXTH

"Do you know," croaked Daddy Green Frog when on the sixth evening his guests arrived, "we have not chosen a story-teller for this evening?"

"I think it was because Fuzzy Caterpillar's story was so true," laughed Cheery Cricket. "I felt guilty myself for I grumbled when I found it was raining."

"You are not the only one," laughed Fuzzy Caterpillar. "If the truth were known, most of us felt the same way about the rain."

"Not I," said Noddy Tumble-bug. "No one ever hears us complain about rainy weather. We can always roll larger balls on damp days than we can on dry days."

"So we can," said Sadie Beetle, and every one laughed. They all remembered the first evening they had met, when Tilly Tumble-bug dozed.

"Well," laughed Mamma Green Frog, "who tells one to-night?"

No one answered; then Sadie Beetle crawled out on the end of a twig and offered to take the evening if no one else had a tale ready.

She was greeted with a cheer, and feeling very important, Sadie Beetle smoothed down her little brown dress and began this little story.

SADIE BEETLE'S MERRY TALE

Bobby Acorn was a little acorn boy who lived on the branch of a great tall oak tree that stood near a high board fence. He had long since grown tired of his home and one day the little brother acorn who slept on the twig next to Bobby Acorn became angry and gave Bobby such a push that he let go his hold on Mamma Oak Tree's arm and dropped to the ground.

There he lay day after day in the cold rain until a little boy, on his way home from school, picked up Bobby Acorn and threw him over the high board fence.

"Well! Well!" exclaimed Bobby Acorn, getting up quickly and brushing the mud from his little brown shell, "I am glad I landed on this side of that fence; I have always wanted to see what was over here."

"Cut! Cut!" clucked a voice at his side, and Bobby Acorn looked up into Yellow Hen's face. "What in the world are you?"

"An acorn boy," laughed Bobby Acorn, scratching his rough head with his long fingers. "Don't you know what an acorn is?"

"Good to eat," clucked Yellow Hen, giving his head a peck.

"No! No!" he cried. "No one but pigs eat acorns."

"Then you should take care or the family of pigs who live here will make short work of you," said Yellow Hen as she went strutting out of sight.

"Oh, dear," cried Bobby Acorn, "it would be dreadful to be eaten by a pig." Poor Bobby was sorry he had left his nice leafy home. "If I could only go back again, I would never quarrel or be bad again."

But the longer Bobby looked at the high board fence the higher it seemed to grow.

Before dark, back to their home came Daddy Pig and his family, eating everything they could find as they went.

Bobby Acorn saw them, and rolled under a board to hide. Late that night, when the pig family were asleep, Bobby rolled from under the board and down the hill to the sidewalk.

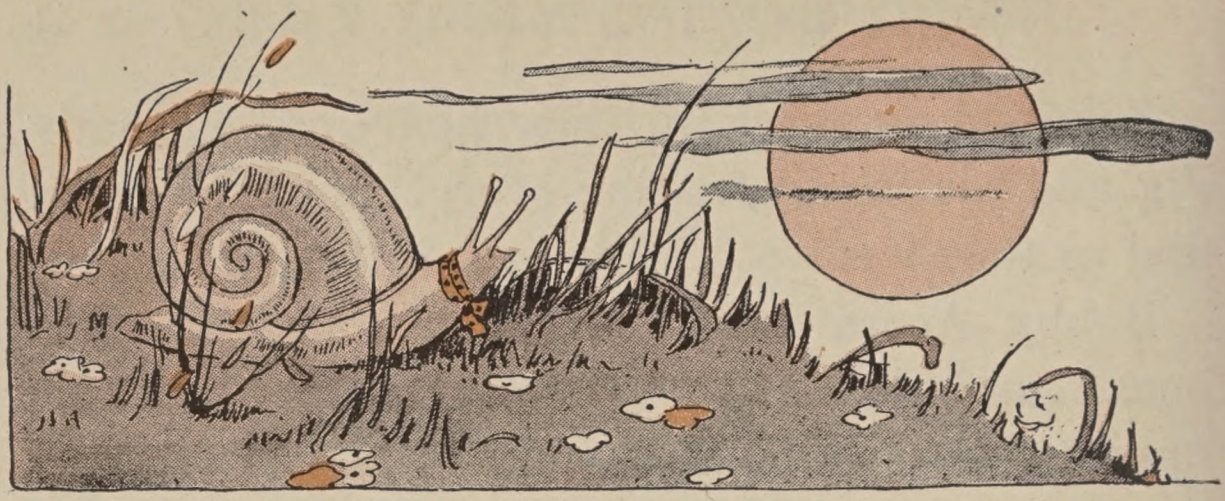
"It serves me right!" exclaimed the poor little acorn boy, "for not being content with what I had."

The next morning along came a bright-eyed little girl, who picked up Bobby Acorn and carried him home. Her daddy took his penknife and ripped off part of Bobby's rough cap and cut out his little brown shell suit.

Bobby was frightened until he heard the little girl laugh with glee over the dear little brown basket daddy had whittled out of Bobby Acorn.

The poor little acorn who once thought he was good for nothing but to feed to the pigs found that he was mistaken and he often wished that he might go back and tell his brothers and sisters, for he was very proud of the ribbon bow tied to his hands, and he loved his little mistress.

"That goes to show," buzzed Billy Bumble Bee, "that no matter how useless we all may feel there is always something for us to do. And being able to make those around us happy is a great gift. That was a fine story."



TWILIGHT HOUR THE SEVENTH

The next day the meadow folk, happier than ever before, walked through the grass to the old mill pond.

Daddy and Mamma Green Frog were glad to see them.

Lazy Snail was the last of the little meadow folk to arrive.

"I suppose you stopped to lock your house before you started," croaked Hickity, Wickity, Hoppy Toad, and everybody laughed. Lazy Snail laughed too, for many times they had spoken to her about carrying her house with her wherever she went.

"I find it is much easier to take my house on my back than to lock it up every time I go out, and it is a good thing I do, or I would not be here now. At the foot of the hill I met a huge Ant-eater and I crawled back into my shell house and hid until he went by."

"What a lucky person you are," said Busy Ant. "Your house saved you from harm."

"Yes, indeed!" squeaked Toppy Turtle. "I am proud of my shell house, too. If no one else has a story this evening, I will tell mine."

"Great!" croaked Daddy Green Frog, and Toppy Turtle crawled slowly over the edge of the log and shaking the water from his back cleared his throat and began.

TOPPY TURTLE'S FABLE

How proud old Mr. Sun was when he looked out over the gardens that spread below him!

"Why, had it not been for me, there would not be any vegetables or flowers at all. Every ray of golden light and heat that I send on the earth warms the ground and makes them grow and bear. No one could get along without my aid. Look at the beans and peas that I have made to grow on those vines. Who could do that but me?" and he rolled up a little higher in the sky.

"Oh, of course!" exclaimed Mr. Wind, to whom Mr. Sun had been talking. "But you might at least give others some credit. We bring down the rain clouds to sprinkle and help things grow."

"Yes, you do," said Mr. Sun, "but I am the one to thank for the beautiful gardens."

This was too much for Mr. Wind. He blew away, and vowed that he would stay away all day and leave Mr. Sun alone. So off he went to the mountains, where he found old Jack Frost picking the icicles out of his long white hair, and told him of their friend's boast.

"What a great joke I could play on him," laughed Jack Frost, as he shook out his robes so

that snowflakes fluttered around his feet. "It might be a good thing too. It might cure him of boasting so much," and he whispered something in Mr. Wind's ear that made him shriek with laughter.

"Great!" he cried. "Let us try it this evening. It might cure him," and Mr. Wind and Jack Frost spent part of the day planning how they would do it.

"When he gets up in the morning and throws out his hot sunbeams they will just burn every plant until it droops and dies," laughed Jack Frost. "Then, I wonder if he will boast."

As soon as Mr. Sun dropped into his bed behind the hills that night, Jack Frost called his tiny Frost Imps together. They spread a great blanket of frost over all the gardens, and then hurried back to their home in the mountains.

When Mr. Sun awoke he knew something was wrong, for the grass, the flowers, and all the vegetables that had been so green the night before were silver color. Then he remembered how Mr. Wind had laughed when he had boasted of his great work for growing things, and instead of getting up for the day Mr. Sun crept back to his cloud bed and stayed there three hours longer.

When he crawled out again Mr. Wind had gathered up the silver frost blanket and had carried it away. The very thought of what might have

happened gave Mr. Sun a terrible fright. From that day to this he has never been heard to boast, and he is always ready to give others credit for what they do.

Toppy Turtle cleared his throat, scratched his little head with his front foot, crawled over to the end of the log, and jumped into the water.

"Glad you like it," squeaked Toppy Turtle, and waving his feet at his friends, he swam under the stones.

Every one paid their respects to their host and hostess and, chatting merrily, scampered off across the meadows.

THE NEXT EVENING

"Glad to see you, friends!" croaked Daddy Green Frog as he and Mamma Green Frog hopped upon the stone to welcome their guests. "Who is the lucky one this time?"

"It must be Noddy Tumble-bug, Lazy Snail, Finny Perch, Katy-did, Busy Ant, or myself," drawled Grandaddy Long Legs.

"Here! Here!" laughed a hoarse voice, and with a great big jump Hickity, Wickity, Hoppy Toad hurried down to the water's edge. "I have not been heard yet."

"Well! Of all things," laughed Mamma Green Frog, shaking Hickity, Wickity, Hoppy Toad's claw. "Sure enough, you have not been asked to tell a story. Suppose we choose Hickity, Wickity, Hoppy Toad for this evening."

The meadow folk all cheered and Hickity, Wickity, Hoppy Toad began fanning herself with a broad leaf.

"If I am to talk to-night, I will just simply have to take this warm dress off," she laughed. "You see the hot sun after the rain made my clothes shrink."

"Certainly, take it off!" cried the meadow

folk, and Hickity, Wickity, Hoppy Toad began to pull and twist and twist and pull. Rip! went her gown down the back. Hickity, Wickity, Hoppy Toad pulled some more and her little faded dress began to come off. She took her hind leg and tucked it under her forearm, gave a jerk, and out came the sleeve of her gown. She pulled off her skirt with her mouth, and there she stood in a pretty new dress.

"Quite clever! One never need worry about her wardrobe when she can carry her clothes with her. Shall I take your old gown?" cried Grandaddy Long Legs.

"Thank you," croaked Hickity, Wickity, Hoppy Toad, and right before the meadow folk, Hickity, Wickity, Hoppy Toad opened her mouth and swallowed the bundle of clothes.

"Well! Of all things!" cried Finny Perch, flipping the water with her tail. "I have never seen that done before!"

"Why, Mamma Green Frog and I do the very same thing when our suits grow too tight for us," laughed Daddy Green Frog. "But I suppose it looks funny to folks who have never seen it done before."

"I have lived in this meadow a good many years, and I never saw a toad change her clothes before," laughed Busy Ant.

"I suppose that is because you have always been afraid to get close enough to watch me," laughed Hickity, Wickity, Hoppy Toad. "I am glad those days are over, for it's far better to be friends," and Hickity, Wickity, Hoppy Toad hopped upon a stone and croaked this little tale.

HICKITY, WICKITY, HOPPY TOAD'S STORY

Lady Bug tied her little bonnet under her funny little chin and hurried down the road.

"Where to now?" asked Willy Walking Stick, running out of his little house at the foot of a tree. "Are you going far?"

'Oh, yes, indeed!" replied Lady Bug. "I am going out to see the world. Now that I think of it, should you see any one knocking on my door, you might tell them I shall not be home before night."

"Well," said Willy Walking Stick, "if you are going very far, you had better take an umbrella with you."

"An umbrella!" exclaimed Lady Bug. "Why, Willy Walking Stick, what is the matter with your eyesight? This is a wonderful day! Look at the lovely blue sky and the glorious sunshine. Do you think I would spoil it by carrying an umbrella over my head? No thank you, friend; I am not like some of my friends, always worrying about their beauty, that is only skin deep. I am not afraid of freckles, but thank you just the same," and Lady Bug started on.

"Wait a minute!" cried Willy Walking Stick. "You do not understand me! I am not thinking about the sun! I am thinking about the rain. Before night we shall have a heavy shower and you will spoil your new dotted dress," and Willy Walking Stick ran back into his little house and soon came out with an umbrella which he asked Lady Bug to carry.

"That is just like you," laughed Lady Bug. "Always thinking of some good deed to do. But I cannot see what makes you think it is going to rain. Why, there is not a sign of a rain cloud!"

"I may be an old Walking Stick, Lady Bug, but there is nothing the matter with me," replied Willy Walking Stick gently. "But whenever I see the sorrel drooping its leaves as it does this morning, I know it is going to rain hard before sunset."

Lady Bug laughed and hurried on down the road, leaving Willy Walking Stick wagging his head and looking sad.

Lady Bug went singing on her way, stopping to chat with all her friends. She visited every one she knew, and had one jolly day of it, but when she started home, she found the blue sky filled with great dark clouds and not a ray of sunshine anywhere.

She tried to hurry, but the twigs held her back;

so spreading her little wings, Lady Bug lifted herself into the air. The wind whipped her first one way, then another and, with a cry of distress, Lady Bug dropped back to the ground again. The rain began to patter on the leaves and flowers, and Lady Bug with a weary sigh crawled under a leaf to wait until the shower was over.

"Bad weather," chirped a merry voice, and Lady Bug, who was very nervous, jumped with fright. Then she laughed and shook Black Cricket's hand.

"Yes, it's raining quite hard, and I am a long way from home without an umbrella," and Lady Bug laughed to hide her nervousness.

"Whoever would think of carrying an umbrella with her on such a lovely day as it started out to be this morning? I have none either," chirped Black Cricket. "I never thought of a storm."

"It serves me right," said Lady Bug. "Willy Walking Stick told me it was going to rain, but I thought it was just one of his jokes and made fun of him when he said he could tell by the sorrel leaves."

"Well, he was right," sighed Black Cricket. "The clover leaves always turn up and the sorrel plants droop their leaves. I always consult them about the weather and they have never made a mistake so far."

Lady Bug waited until the storm had passed; then she hurried home, stopping at Willy Walking Stick's house to say that she was sorry she had not heeded his warning.

From that time on Lady Bug never left her house without first running out to her tiny garden,

where she had a row of sorrel and clover planted, to see just what their leaves were doing.

"The very idea!" exclaimed Katy-did. "I have wondered why it was Parasol Ant always carried her umbrella with her. She probably has some of those flowers growing in her yard. I am glad to know that! I will not forget it."

"Listen," laughed Toppy Turtle. "You do

not mean to say that it is true, do you? I mean about the clover and sorrel plants."

"Certainly," replied Hickity, Wickity, Hoppy Toad. "Of course it is true!"

"Then your tale was doubly good!" exclaimed Daddy Green Frog. "For it's news to me."

THE NINTH TWILIGHT

The meadow folk chatted merrily as they scampered over the grass to Daddy and Mamma Green Frog's house.

"We did not choose any one for this evening, did we?" asked Mamma Green Frog after her guests were all seated.

"I do not believe we did," croaked Daddy Green Frog. "Some of you who have not told a story, step forward."

Some seconds passed, then Finny Perch gave the water a thud with her tail and offered her services if no one else was ready.

"Of course it will have to be a story about some of my water friends," she laughed, "for I do not know much about your meadows. You see the only time we water folk hear anything about you is when some worm comes calling and tells us."

"Oh, I think a tale about some of the water folk would be great!" cried Cheery Cricket. "We never get a chance to learn about you folk."

So it was voted, and Finny Perch flipped her tail again and began:

THE TALE FINNY PERCH RELATED

Once upon a time there lived down at the bottom of the big ocean a tiny little Crab Boy — Carlie Crab every one called him, and they certainly had to call him several times before this sleepy, lazy, little selfish crab would pay any attention to them. Carlie Crab would back out of his way to avoid doing a kindness to any one. He would rather eat than do anything else, except sleep, and Carlie Crab was never happier than when he was curled up on the sand, dreaming.

One day his neighbor, Mr. Hermit Crab, called Carlie Crab and asked him if he would go on an errand for him.

"Yes," snapped Carlie, who was too sleepy to talk any more than was needed. "What is it?"

"I should like to have you run over to Mrs. Oyster's school and tell her I just overheard some fish folk say they were going to gather oysters to-day," replied Mr. Hermit Crab. "Tell her to be careful, and just as soon as I finish teaching this class of little crabs how to walk backward, I shall come over and keep guard for her."

"Why cannot she look out for herself?" asked

Carlie Crab, who had never heard of such a thing before. "How can you tell her?"

"Why," laughed Mr. Hermit Crab, "oysters have no eyes, you know, and we have. Of course they can hear, but sometimes the fish swim up so quietly that the oysters do not have time to close their shell doors, and the fish eat them. When I am there and see a fish swimming toward an oyster, I just crawl up and pinch the oyster and he closes his shell before Mr. Fish gets him. Now run along like a good crab boy."

Carlie Crab did run along, but not far, for he was too sleepy to move. Finding a nice sleeping spot, Carlie Crab decided he would take a nap.

Carlie Crab was just nodding when he spied a crowd of queer-looking folk turn from behind a rock and start toward him. Before Carlie Crab knew what they were about, Mr. and Mrs. Barnacle and their family of little ones had climbed upon his back.

"Just the place I have been looking for!" exclaimed Mr. Barnacle. "We can settle on this crab's back and see the world without any trouble."

"I always did want to travel," laughed Mrs. Barnacle, and she quickly caught hold of Carlie Crab with her little feelers, and behold, the family of Barnacles were holding fast to Carlie Crab's back. Shake as hard as he could, Carlie Crab

could not shake them off, for once glued to anything Barnacles remain there until they die.

Carlie Crab was so ashamed he hurried over to Mrs. Oyster's schoolroom, arriving just in time to save Mrs. Oyster herself from a great big ugly looking fish. He not only told Mr. Hermit Crab's message, but Carlie Crab stayed in that school of oysters, and every time a fish swam toward them, Carlie Crab would run up and pinch the oysters. Down in his little crab heart, Carlie Crab knew that if he had been busy like most of his water friends, Mr. and Mrs. Barnacle and their family would not have caught him asleep.

Finny Perch splashed the water with her fins and swallowed a gnat.

"Fine!" cried Cheery Cricket. "That is the first time I ever knew Crabs walked backward."

"Yes, they do," laughed Toppy Turtle, "and I know it to be true that they are the best bodyguards the Oysters ever had."

"I am glad Barnacles do not live on land," laughed Lazy Snail, "for my back would be covered all the time."

"Oh, no," croaked Mamma Green Frog. "They may call you lazy, but I know you are not. You are just slow. But who would not travel slow with a house on his back?"

"That makes me think!" exclaimed Grandaddy

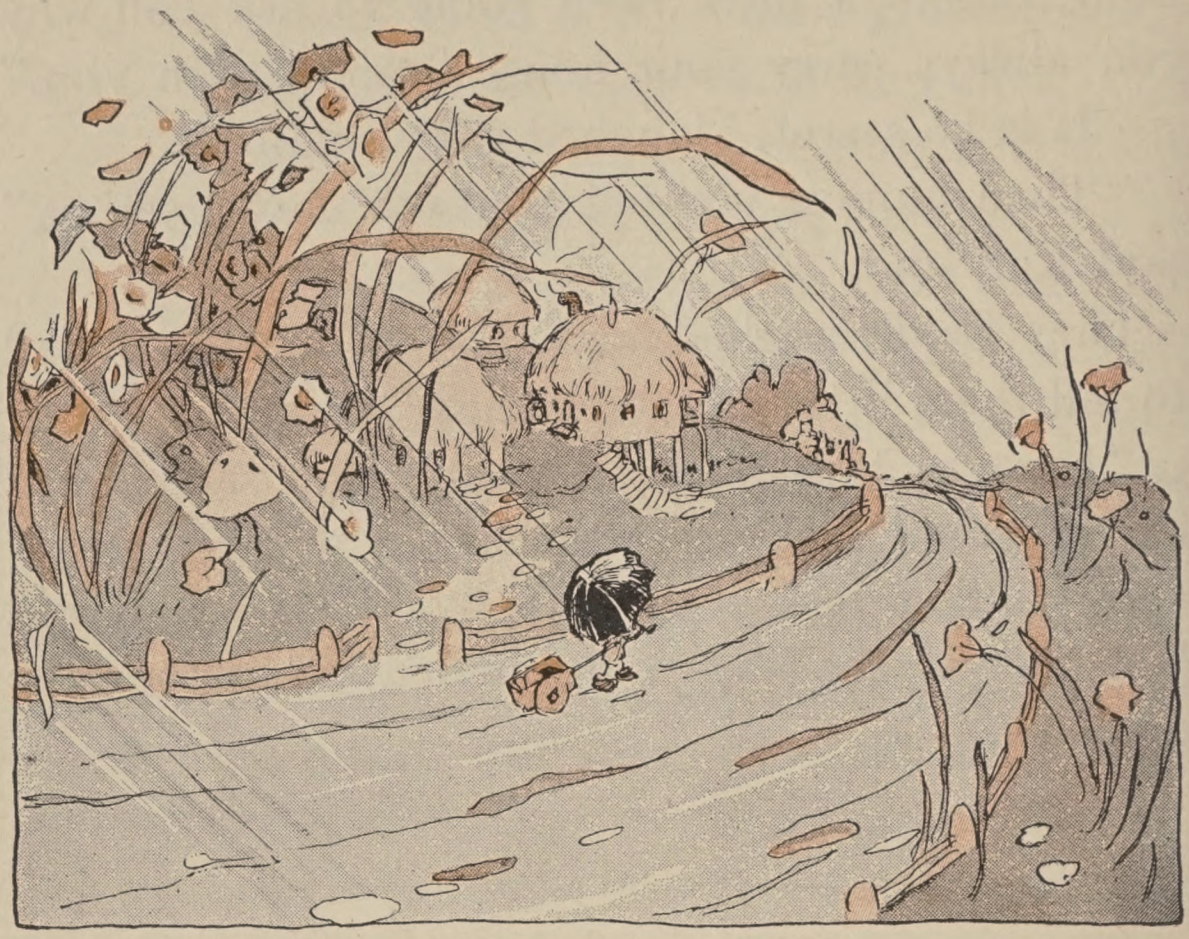
Long Legs, "I have been going to ask you why you always carry your house around with you."

"It is no secret," laughed Lazy Snail.

"Then suppose you tell us at our next meeting," said Katy-did.

Lazy Snail laughed, and said she would be glad to tell them if they cared to hear her story.

"I never talk about myself," she said, "but if you would really like to hear, I will tell you," and holding her head proudly, Lazy Snail bid her friends good-by and hurried off across the meadow.



THE TENTH EVENING

All day long there fell a slight mist that made the grass wet, and the meadow folk kept close to their little houses.

There was a cry of joy when the rain stopped and the sun rolled out from behind the clouds. The meadow folk met again to hear Lazy Snail's story.

LAZY SNAIL'S STORY

One bright day a few years ago, when Nellie Snail was out walking through this meadow, she met a stranger Snail who had chanced to stop in the meadow to rest.

"Good morning, Stranger!" said Nellie Snail politely, for Nellie Snail was just as polite as any little Snail could be. "And, pray, may I ask who you are?"

"To be sure," replied the stranger. "I am a snail like yourself and my name is Merry Snail."

"A Snail!" said Nellie Snail, "you surely are a queer looking snail."

"Not any more so than you!" said Merry Snail. "But I must be on my way."

"Please tell me more about yourself," exclaimed Nellie Snail.

Without a word Merry Snail started away, but Nellie Snail, thinking she was being made fun of, crawled in front of the stranger and stopped her.

"What class of folk am I like?" cried Nellie Snail.

"Like that class of lazy snails that I have heard live in this meadow," replied Merry Snail, "and

I have come here to teach you a few things you should know."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Nellie Snail. "If such be the case, I warn you this meadow does not need you. I suppose you feel quite proud with that old shell on your back."

"There! There!" laughed the strange Snail, "I did not come here to quarrel. I want to help you."

"By having us carry our shells on our back!" exclaimed Nellie Snail. "If that is it you may as well go back where you came from."

"You do not understand," said Merry Snail kindly.

"I do not want to!" cried Nellie Snail, as she started away. Just then she heard the swish of wings overhead and just had time to crawl under a leaf. Here she hid until Merry Snail called her.

"He has gone. Come out," laughed Merry Snail.

"Where did you hide?" asked Nellie Snail, looking around. There was not another leaf in sight.

"Hide!" laughed Merry Snail. "Why, in my house, of course," and Merry Snail quick as a flash drew her head and long body back into the shell she had been carrying on her back.

When she stuck her head out again she was laughing merrily.

"Why didn't you tell me before?" cried Nellie Snail.

"Because you did not give me a chance," said the stranger.

Nellie Snail was ashamed of the rude way in which she had spoken to the stranger. "I am

sorry for what I said, but I am glad that bird did not eat you."

"Now I will tell you where I hid," said Merry Snail, shaking hands with Nellie Snail. "And I forgive you. This shell, that I carry on my back, is my house. When danger comes near me, I crawl inside and hide until it passes."

Nellie Snail went all around Merry Snail and looked at her shell house, and then she asked Merry Snail if she would tell her where she found it.

Merry Snail took Nellie Snail down to the shore and found her a new shell house. Before long every snail in the meadow was carrying a shell house on her back.

"That is how I came to have a shell house and why I carry it with me every place I go," said Lazy Snail. "Nellie Snail was none other than myself," and bowing, she crawled down among her friends.

All the meadow folk cheered and shook Lazy Snail's hand.

"I am sure you have found it a very good thing to do," laughed Busy Ant. "I would not mind being able to carry my house around with me."

"I wouldn't be without a shell on my back," exclaimed Toppy Turtle.

"Neither would I," replied Lazy Snail, "but it taught me a great lesson, not to judge too quickly, and not to get angry."

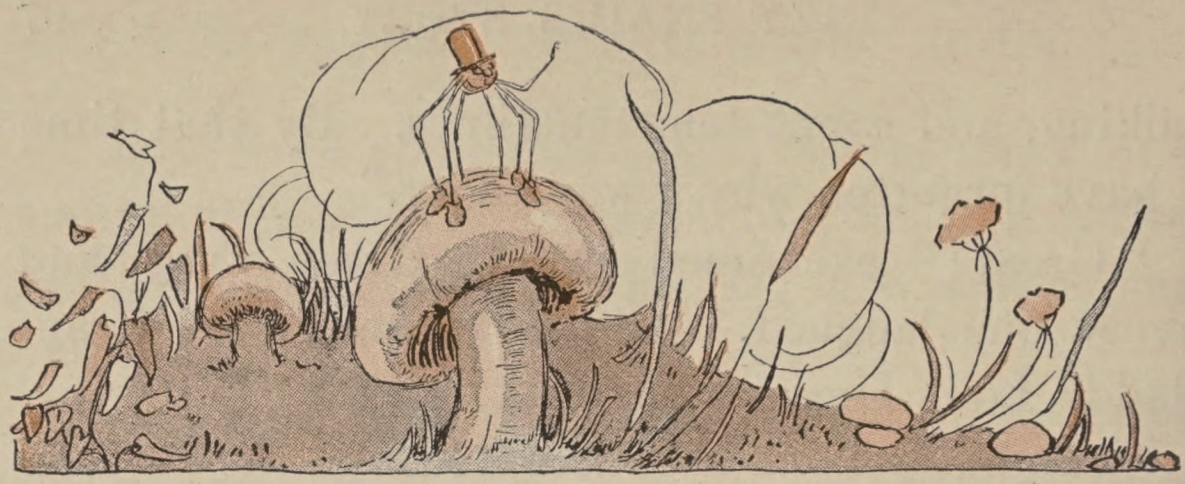
"That may be why you are called Lazy," laughed Cheery Cricket. "You are slow to answer and they call that slowness, laziness."

"No," replied Lazy Snail. "I have learned the best thing to do when I feel angry is to stop

talking, and count ten, ten times. By that time I have forgotten why I was angry."

"Great!" exclaimed Daddy Green Frog, and every one laughed. "Suppose we choose Grandaddy Long Legs for our next story."

Grandaddy Long Legs accepted, and the meadow folk bid Daddy and Mamma Green Frog good night and went home.



ON THE ELEVENTH EVENING

Grandaddy Long Legs was the first to arrive at Daddy and Mamma Green Frog's house the next evening.

"Come early and avoid the rush is a good idea!" croaked Daddy Green Frog. "But, all joking aside, I think it is a good plan for the story-teller to be early. It gives him time to get his breath before he begins."

"Well," sighed Grandaddy Long Legs, "that did not worry me in the least, but I have had a rather busy day."

"Chasing cows?" asked Cheery Cricket, who hopped in just in time to hear Grandaddy Long Legs' last remark.

"Yes," replied Grandaddy Long Legs. "I lost my leg trying to find one cow."

"Oh my!" cried the meadow folk, crowding around their friend. "How?"

"Oh, a boy!" replied Grandaddy Long Legs. "He caught me, and asked where his cows were.

I pointed the way the cows went and the bad boy held me so fast that I pulled off one of my legs trying to get away."

"You mean to tell me you have lost one of your legs, and can still laugh and talk about it!" cried Mamma Green Frog.

"What is the use of crying?" laughed Grandaddy Long Legs. "It still leaves me seven."

"Yes, but how in the world can you get along without that other leg?" asked Toppy Turtle.

"Well!" laughed Grandaddy Long Legs cheerfully, "I have still seven legs left, and if I should lose one this evening I would still be grateful for the six that would be left. If I should lose another in the morning I could walk on five and would count myself lucky."

"You have more patience," said Mamma Green Frog, "than all of us. I do not see how you do it!"

"Well, at first I found it hard, but now," laughed Grandaddy Long Legs, "I am all right. Of course it is rather slow work to grow a new one, but how nice and new it will be! Then, when you folk ask my age, I will have to say, 'Part of me is so many years old, and one leg is so many days old,'" and the old fellow laughed so heartily the meadow folk could not help but see how brave and cheerful he really was.

"Is everybody here?" he asked. "If so, I will begin my story," and after looking around Grandaddy Long Legs crawled upon a mushroom and began.

GRANDADDY LONG LEGS' YARN

It always pays to face danger with a smile, and that is just what Tiny Grey Mousie did.

One day his Mamma sent him to market to buy some things for their Sunday dinner. She warned him not to stop along the way to play with any of the other children.

Tiny Grey Mousie was on his way home with his basket full of good things when he saw two Grasshopper boys playing leap-frog, and he stopped to watch them.

He played so long he was very tired. When he saw the sun going down behind the hills, he quickly gathered up his basket and started for home. He was ashamed to think he had disobeyed his Mamma.

He had not gone far when he met Miss Puss.

"Hello there!" cried Miss Puss, and Tiny Grey Mousie's heart beat so loudly against his little gray coat that he felt sure Miss Puss could hear it.

"What have you in your basket?"

"Oh, kind Puss!" replied Tiny Grey Mousie, "it is food for my brothers and sisters."

"Give it to me," cried Miss Puss. "I am very hungry!"

Tiny Grey Mousie's little teeth began to chatter. He knew if he did not hand his basket over to Miss Puss, she would not only take it away from him, but she would eat him as well. So Tiny Grey Mousie tried to act brave.

"Certainly, good friend! Let us find a nice cool spot under some tree and have a picnic; I am hungry myself."

"Very well!" laughed Miss Puss. Down in her heart she could not help but admire Tiny Grey Mousie for his pluck. "Had you refused, I should have eaten you. We will find a place," and Miss Puss took hold of the other side of the basket and away they went.

They had gone but a short way when they met Tom Cat, who stopped them to find out what was in the basket, and why Miss Puss was in the company of a mouse.

Grey Mousie was scared. What chance had he with two cats, his worst enemies? But without showing his fear, he invited Tom Cat to join them, and away they trotted until they came to a cool spot down by the river under a big maple tree.

"You set the table and I will get the things out of the basket," said Tiny Grey Mousie, and he handed the Cats the papers off the top of his basket to spread on the ground as a lunch cloth. Miss Puss and Tom Cat spread the papers and

laid four stones on the four corners. They were both so busy trying to figure out how they could cheat each other when it came to eating Tiny Grey Mousie that they did not see him run up the tree, and when they turned around and saw him out on the limb, they ordered him to come right down.

"Certainly," replied Tiny Grey Mousie. "But have you decided which of you will eat me? If not, I think I can help you."

"How so?" asked Tom Cat. "You are mine. I am much stronger than Miss Puss. I will fight for you!"

"That would be too bad," squeaked Tiny Grey Mousie.

"Just the same I will fight for you!" exclaimed Miss Puss. "I found you first."

"I tell you!" cried Tiny Grey Mousie, "I will give myself up to the one who can jump over that moon," and Tiny Grey Mousie pointed to the picture of the moon out in the middle of the stream.

"Not a bad idea!" exclaimed Miss Puss. "Suppose we try it. First over wins." She looked at Tom Cat and said, "You look as if you were a better jumper than I, but let us try it. If I lose, I will not complain."

The two cats chose the starting point and both

started off at the same time. Plunk! Plunk! They went out into the middle of the stream.

Such splashing and yelling was never heard before.

Tiny Grey Mousie had to laugh. But he lost no time, and jumping from the limb across the

stream he went home as fast as his legs could carry him.

Tiny Grey Mousie never disobeyed his Mamma again, but he never forgot that he had won the fight by being brave and cheerful.

Grandaddy Long Legs stretched his seven remaining legs and crawled down from the mushroom.

"Well!" laughed Cheery Cricket. "As my mother would say, 'A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.' Those cats deserved to lose Tiny Grey Mousie, and I am glad they did!"

"So am I," buzzed Billy Bumble Bee. "Even if he does visit my bee wells and take my honey. I am always ready to shout for the fellow who can face a danger bravely."

"Yes," drawled Lazy Snail, "your story is a good one."

"Well," chirped a cricket baby, "I am glad Tiny Grey Mousie has learned it does not pay to disobey."

Everybody laughed, and paying their respects to Mamma and Daddy Green Frog, the meadow folk went home.

TWILIGHT THE TWELFTH

What a glorious evening it was! All the colors of the rainbow were seen in the old mill pond, giving the deep shadows under the trees a purple color.

"Is it not a wonderful close to the day!" exclaimed Johnny Grasshopper. "I have never seen such weather at this time of year."

"Well," laughed Noddy Tumble-bug, "I have seen many a day just like it, but I have been too busy to notice the beauty."

"That is one thing I think this story hour has done for us all," croaked Daddy Green Frog. "Made us see the beauties of this meadow as we have never seen them before."

"That just reminds me of a story I would like to tell sometime!" exclaimed Katy-did.

"Now's the time!" cried Mamma Green Frog.

"If I remember correctly," croaked Daddy Green Frog, "we did not select any story-teller

for this evening, so I am sure, Katy-did, we shall be glad to hear your tale."

Katy-did crawled out on the tip-end of a leaf that hung over the water, and nodding to her friends, she told this merry tale.

KATY-DID'S MERRY YARN

Down in the meadow, once upon a time, there lived a little Wasp — Wappy Wasp, they called him. Now the meadow folk thought anything Wappy Wasp did not know was not worth knowing, and night after night, just before it grew dark, they would gather down by Wappy Wasp's house to hear the tales he would tell about the things he had seen that day in his travels.

"How wonderful it must be to be able to travel the way you do!" sighed Mamma Ant. She had never been out of the meadow herself. "All I get to see is the few feet around the stream here, and I do grow very tired of it."

"It must be hard not to have wings so one can fly around," buzzed Wappy Wasp. "Travel is such an education to one."

"So it is," said Earth Worm, who never lost a chance to lie at Wappy Wasp's feet and listen to his stories. "What wonderful sights you must have seen!"

Wappy Wasp's chest swelled with pride. He liked nothing better than to be the center of attraction.

"Well," he laughed, "I think there is not very much in this world that I have not seen."

"How perfectly wonderful!" cried Mamma Ant.

"Yes, it is wonderful," replied Wappy Wasp. "Why, I really can say without the least doubt that I have seen everything there is to see in this

world, thanks to my wings," and Wappy Wasp, with a proud air, shook out his wings and showed them to his friends. "Yes, I have seen everything there is to see."

Timmy Grasshopper had just come up in time to hear Wappy Wasp's last boast. "How nice! And how much more learned than the rest of us you must feel."

"Oh, indeed yes!" exclaimed Wappy Wasp, wagging his little head. "Travel teaches one so much."

"And you say you have seen everything in this world?" continued Timmy Grasshopper.

"Everything that is worth seeing," replied Wappy Wasp. "I have been all over this meadow, through the woods, over the hills, and even down into the city. I have seen it by day and I have seen it by night, so I can truthfully say I have seen everything you might care to ask me about."

"Is not that wonderful?" drawled Timmy Grasshopper. "I have never been beyond the hill over there, but I am sure I have seen something you, Wappy Wasp, have never seen in all your travels."

At this, Wappy Wasp straightened up proudly. It was the first time any one had dared question him, and he certainly was not going to give in to such a fellow as Timmy Grasshopper. His first thought was to rush at him and sting him; then he changed his mind and laughed with a loud buzz.

"So, foolish fellow!" he cried, "you challenge me? Well! What is there that such a stay-at-home as yourself has seen that has passed by me? Out with it. I doubt you! What is there in this world that's to be seen that I have missed in my travels?"

"A river that turns from gold to silver!" exclaimed Timmy Grasshopper.

How the meadow folk did prick up their ears at that. Here was just plain old common Timmy Grasshopper, who had not been beyond yonder

hill, yet he boasted of seeing a magic river. It struck them all as very funny.

"Neither have you," exclaimed Wappy Wasp. "There is no such river except in fairy tales."

"But I have seen it myself, a river that turns from gold to silver," replied Timmy Grasshopper quietly. "Have you never seen it?"

"Well!" laughed Wappy Wasp, "I cannot say that I ever have."

"Yet you sit here and try to make these little meadow folk unhappy with their lot," chirped Timmy Grasshopper. "Why, friends! If Wappy Wasp has not seen the magic river I speak of, then he is no better than the rest of us."

"You will have to prove it to me," cried the angry Wasp, getting browner in the face than ever. "I will not believe it nor will the others here, unless you show us the wonderful river of which you speak."

"Very well," laughed Timmy Grasshopper, who never stayed out of humor with any one very long, "but, first, I must tie a leaf over your eyes so you will not know which way I take you."

Mamma Ant did not believe Timmy Grasshopper's words, but she, with the others, allowed Timmy Grasshopper to tie the leaf over her eyes.

"Now hold on to each other's hand," whispered Timmy Grasshopper.

Mamma Ant took hold of Earth Worm's tail and Wappy Wasp took hold of his head and Timmy Grasshopper took hold of Wappy Wasp's feelers and off they went.

Timmy Grasshopper smiled to himself as he led them to a stem of a plant and out on a leaf, then dropped to the ground with them down beside the river that ran through their meadow home.

Here Timmy Grasshopper stopped and untied

the leaves from his friends' eyes. Behold! The river before them was shining gold from the last rays of the setting sun.

No one said a word, but Timmy Grasshopper could see a look of surprise on every face.

"Now then," chirped Timmy Grasshopper, "if you sit here a few minutes until the moon comes up, this very river which sparkles gold now will change to a wonderful silver before your very eyes," and with a merry chirp Timmy Grasshopper flapped his wings and flew away.

Wappy Wasp had nothing to say. For once in his life he had been outwitted, and he made up his mind if he ever got hold of Timmy Grasshopper, he would shut him up in his cell house. But glad to say, Timmy Grasshopper was too witty, and never hopped near when he saw Wappy Wasp.

Wappy Wasp soon moved his little Inn near the town. He felt better with the hill between them.

But Timmy Grasshopper spent a great part of his time showing the beauties of the meadow to his friends. Before long the tired, bored feeling left Mamma Ant and Earth Worm and they began to love their life. And many an evening they sat beside Timmy Grasshopper on the shore of the magic river and watched its waters turn from gold to silver.

"Well!" exclaimed Cheery Cricket, "that was a splendid story! I was wondering myself how he was going to prove it."

Katy-did laughed and crawled down the leaf among her friends.

"Well, I had not even thought of a story until I heard Noddy Tumble-bug say she had never stopped to look at the beauty of this pond before," said Katy-did.

"Very good," croaked Daddy Green Frog, "and simply goes to prove what I said about the story hour helping us. It has made us learn to know and love the things of beauty around us. Now whom may we hear from to-morrow evening?"

"Well, if Busy Ant is not afraid of being the last one on the list, I will take the story hour," laughed Noddy Tumble-bug.

"I am willing," cried Busy Ant, and bidding each other good night the meadow folk crawled over the fast-falling leaves to their little homes.

THE THIRTEENTH TWILIGHT

Things looked dull for the meadow folk. For quite some time they were not able to get to Daddy and Mamma Green Frog's house, because of the rain and wind. The meadow folk kept close to their little houses. When the first bright evening came it was a crowd of happy little meadow folk that wended their way over the carpet of brown and gold and red leaves to the Frog house.

"And it is our thirteenth meeting!" laughed Lazy Snail.

"So it is," laughed Noddy Tumble-bug, "and I chose this meeting to tell my story. If you do not like it you can blame it to the unlucky number."

"I never pay any attention to such things," croaked Daddy Green Frog.

"To me it is a lucky number," cried Cheery Cricket, "for I finished my little house to-day and now I am ready for winter."

"All I hope is that I will not miss telling my story," squeaked Busy Ant, "for I have been planning it for ever so long."

"You are to be the next and last one," said Daddy Green Frog.

Noddy Tumble-bug crawled out on a stone so she could see everyone, and told this merry tale.

NODDY TUMBLE-BUG'S TALE

The day was very warm and Susan Hop Toad jumped first on a log, then under it, trying to find a cool place.

"Oh, dear," she sighed, "I cannot stand this any longer!"

"What is it?" asked Dippy Spider, who had been watching Susan Hop Toad. "What seems to be the trouble?"

"The hot sun," said Susan Hop Toad. "I am tired of this old tree trunk where I live, and everything in this meadow, its trees, grass, and flowers. As far as you can see there is nothing but dust, dust, dust. What fun can a hop toad have when she gets covered with dust and dirt every time she moves?"

"The meadow is rather dusty," replied Dippy Spider. "I had not noticed it before, because I have been so busy on my new web house. It does not seem to bother me."

"Perhaps it would not bother me so much if it were not for this old tight dress," croaked Susan Hop Toad. "Unless it rains enough to keep my skin moist, it shrinks so tight that it pinches me. I would be as happy as can be if I could live in a

place like Tippy Green Frog's home. Every time she feels her skin growing tight, she flops back into the water, while I have to sit in this dusty hot meadow waiting for the water to be sent to me."

"If I felt that way about the meadow, I would move," squeaked Dippy Spider. "Why do you not go and visit your cousin, Tippy Green Frog?"

"A good idea!" exclaimed Susan Hop Toad with the first sign of happiness Dippy Spider had seen on her ugly face for some time. "I never thought of that! I believe I will go to-day. I will not only pay her a visit, but I will move in with her," and before Dippy Spider could say another word, Susan Hop Toad hopped into her house and came out dragging a signboard behind her.

"I will put up this 'for rent' sign," she croaked, "and you may rent the place to any one who wants it. I will never want it again."

"Perhaps I'd better keep it awhile," began Dippy Spider, when Susan cut her short.

"No indeed," she cried. "Rent it! I will never come back here to live. The fresh cool waters of the pond for me," and croaking merrily, Susan Hop Toad hopped down the long hill to the pond, leaving Dippy Spider sadly shaking her little head.

Tippy Green Frog was delighted to see her cousin and asked her down into her little home which she had built among the rocks under the water.

"Take off your things and make yourself at home," croaked her cousin, after shaking Susan

Hop Toad's claw. "I have often wondered why you never came to pay me a visit."

"I have come to stay!" laughed Susan Hop Toad.

"Good!" laughed Tippy Green Frog. "I have been lonesome these last few days. No rain, no new food, and it always makes us water children

unhappy. But you will brighten things up for us. Now we will go down and have some food," and Tippy Green Frog flopped off the grass into the water. Susan Hop Toad, fearing to show she was not used to water, tried to do as her cousin. She flopped into the water after her, but had to swim back to the surface and get a breath of air before she could speak.

"Oh, you will get used to that after a time," laughed Tippy Green Frog. "Water is as easy to breathe as air."

"You mean to say, —" but Susan Hop Toad did not know how to take air under water and nearly choked. Tippy Green Frog called her friends, and they pulled Susan Hop Toad upon the bank.

"No, indeed!" she cried when she found herself once more on dry land. "No more water homes for me. I am going back to the meadow," and taking her bonnet, Susan Hop Toad hopped up the hill and back to her own little home at the foot of the old tree.

Dippy Spider was happy to see her and welcomed her home.

"You will never hear me complain again," she croaked. "I would rather live in this meadow with all the dust and dirt than stay one day in that pond! Why, I could not breathe there!"

"Certainly not," laughed Dippy Spider. "If you and I had been made for a water home, we would not live in the meadow. How long could Tippy Green Frog and my cousin, Water Spider, live on dry land?"

"Enough for me," croaked Susan Hop Toad, "I will never envy another person as long as I live,"

and she never forgot her promise. She still rents the little house under the root of the old tree, and a happier little Hop Toad never lived than Susan.

"The thirteenth day, and the thirteenth story," laughed Cheery Cricket.

"Yes," drawled Grandaddy Long Legs, "it never pays to envy others."

"I should say it does not," laughed Sadie Beetle. "For generally the very things you envy them for having are useless for you."

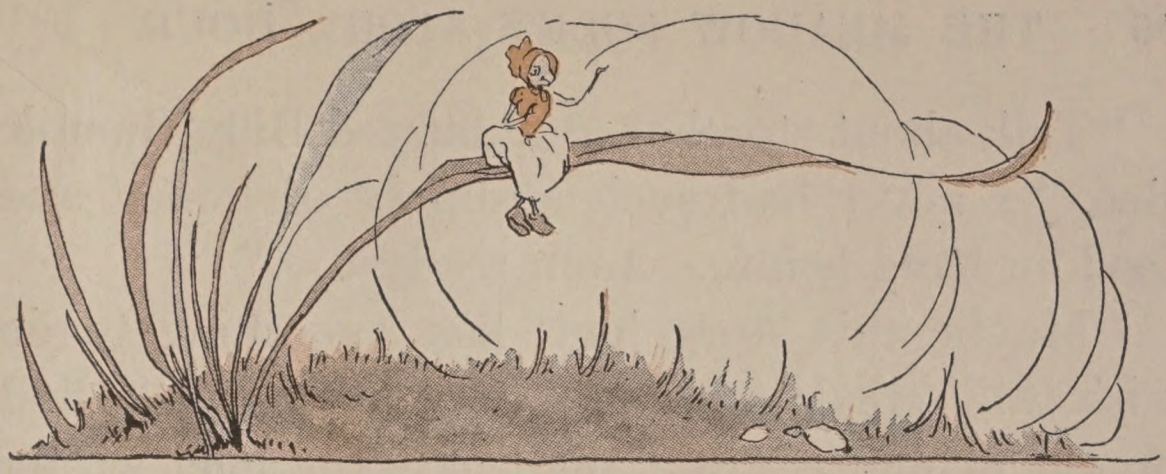
"Friends," croaked Daddy Green Frog, "the next meeting will be the last for the season, I think, for I heard the robins and the wren family talking about going south."

"When Robin Red-breast goes south, it is time to begin putting up the doors for the winter," chirped Cheery Cricket.

"I wish we had some way of telling just when winter will come," said Lazy Snail. "We might be ready for it."

"Yet we might worry over it," croaked Mamma Green Frog, "so I think it's better after all not to know."

"Quite right," laughed Busy Ant. "All I ask is a fine evening to-morrow, so I can add my tale to this story hour," and the meadow folk all trotted home.



THE FOURTEENTH TWILIGHT

Busy Ant's wish was granted. The fourteenth day was a beautiful sunny day, and when the sun went to rest, the merry meadow folk hurried down to the old mill pond.

"I have never felt so sleepy in all my life as I have to-day," said Fuzzy Caterpillar as he joined his friends.

"That accounts for you being tardy, I suppose," croaked Daddy Green Frog. "I have felt rather lazy myself to-day."

"Can't say, I've been exactly lazy," Fuzzy Caterpillar replied. "I finished up my cradle bed and I had to work hard and fast to do it."

"No wonder you are sleepy!" exclaimed Cheery Cricket. "It always makes me sleepy when I see a nice soft bed."

"Old winter can come now just as soon as he wants too," laughed Busy Ant. "I am ready and my storehouses are filled with good things to eat."

"Talk about storehouses," buzzed Billy Bumble Bee, "I never had such a supply of honey and food on hand before. I am ready too."

"Maybe this story hour has something to do with it!" croaked Mamma Green Frog. "I find myself planning how I shall pass the long winter months when our mill pond is covered with ice. The thought of winter does not bother me as it used to in years gone by."

"Nor I," laughed Fuzzy Caterpillar; "but come on, Busy Ant, and spin off your yarn, or I shall go to sleep right before your eyes."

Busy Ant patted Fuzzy Caterpillar's coat with her feelers and crawled out on an old piece of dead grass.

BUSY ANT'S STORY

There was quite a stir among the little folk of the meadow when they awoke one morning, late in the fall, to find queer-looking gray lines stretched from one flower to another.

No one had seen them the evening before and no one could tell what they were.

"It looks as if some one had put them up for a washing," chirped Jimmy Grasshopper.

"I think it very strange," exclaimed Mamma Cricket. "I have lived here long enough for everyone to know that this is my home. Only last evening I rocked the children to sleep in that very spot!"

"You surely did," cried Daddy Cricket. "I sat reading the Cricket Hour and there was not a line in sight then!"

"I wonder who could have been here," chirped Jimmy Grasshopper. "I shall find out," and he hopped to a bush and looked at the queer lines. "It looks like a jumping rope," he laughed.

"Jumping rope indeed!" said Mrs. Beetle, running up to see what the folk were looking at. "Can you never think of anything but jumping? I am glad we are not all like you."

"Here, here, friends," laughed Daddy Cricket, who did not like to hear them quarrel. "I hardly think it is a jumping rope myself, but do not fuss about it. They are such queer things I should like to know who put them there."

"Do you suppose Mrs. Spider could have put them there?" asked Mrs. Beetle.

"Sure enough," laughed Mamma Cricket. "They do look like her wires. But what in the world was she thinking about to string them all over the meadow? We must ask her about this."

The idea suited all except Jimmy Grasshopper. While the others followed Mamma Cricket to

Mrs. Spider's house, Jimmy Grasshopper sat down to think. He always likes to find out things for himself.

"The best way to find out is to follow the wire up and see where it begins," and Jimmy Grasshopper followed up the gray lines until he reached the edge of the meadow. Here under a bush on a toadstool sat a queer little elfin dressed in dark brown clothes. In one hand he held a queer-looking black thing on his knee and with the other he held something black against his ear.

"Here! here! wait a second," he called when he saw Jimmy Grasshopper before him. "Here is a fellow now who will help me, I am sure."

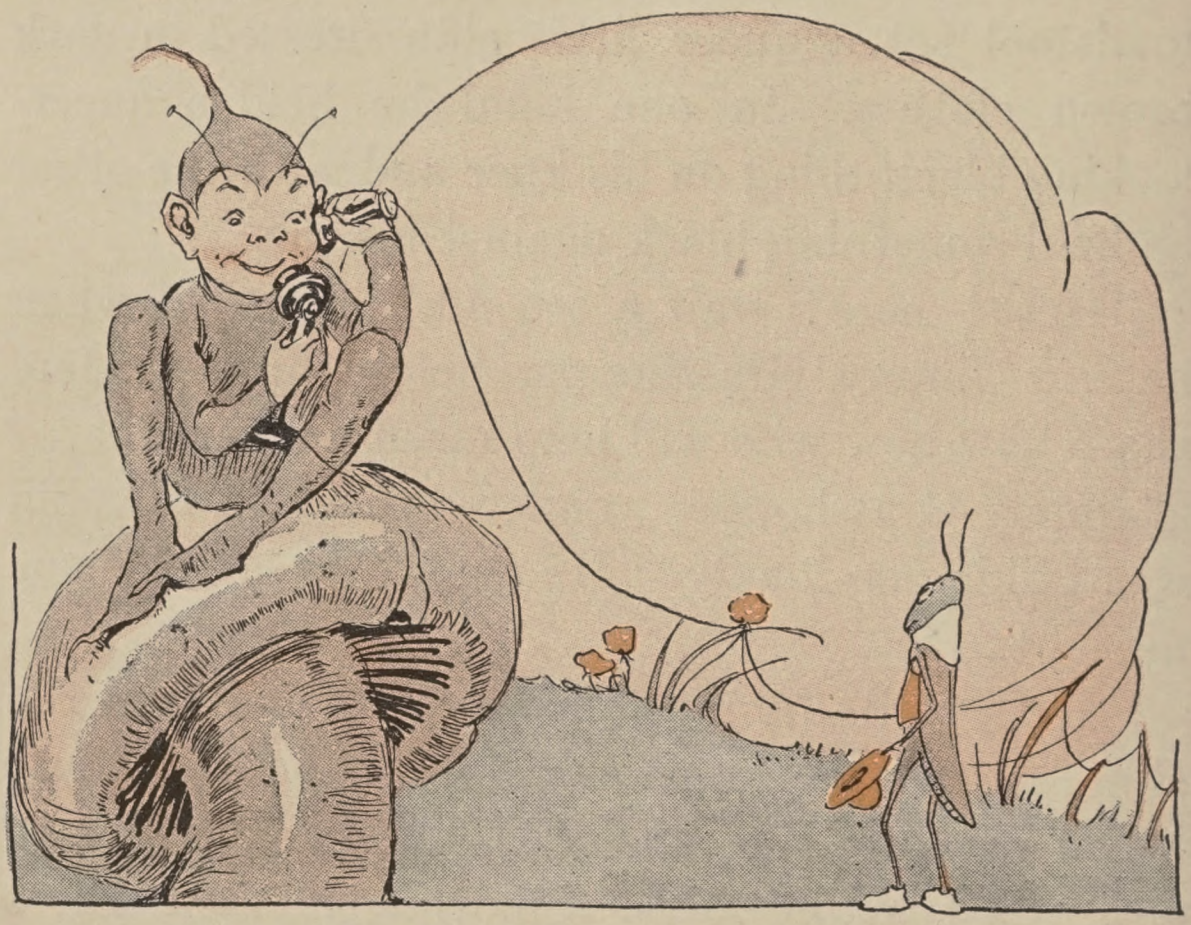
Jimmy Grasshopper wondered to whom the elfin was talking so loudly. He could not see any one in sight.

"Well, well, Jimmy Grasshopper," laughed the elfin, setting the black thing down on the grass. "You are just the person I have been trying to get. Last night Mrs. Spider stretched these telephone wires for the fairy folk and one of them has just called me to say old winter has left his home in the north and will be here soon. You can help me warn our friends."

"So that is what those queer wires are for!" exclaimed Jimmy Grasshopper, and with an excited chirp he hurried off to warn his meadow friends.

They all ran off to see the queer-looking telephone and to thank the elfin and the fairies. Then they went over to Mrs. Spider to thank her for her help; and bidding each other good-by they crept into their little homes and waited for winter.

Busy Ant finished and scrambled down off the dead grass.



"Well, you could not have chosen a better story for this time of year," laughed Grandaddy Long Legs, "for before long we will have to scamper off to our beds."

"I wonder if that is the reason you always find so many gray web wires stretched over the meadows in the fall," said Cheery Cricket.

"I think so," croaked Daddy Green Frog. "Why, this very morning I saw them swinging in the sunlight above my head. They were drawn from the tree to that cat-tail over there. I was just about to touch one when a bird flew over and broke them all down."

"Well!" croaked Mamma Green Frog, "a good time we have had these last days, and it all goes to show that it pays to be always happy. There is not one among us who is not ready for old winter, in case the fairies should call this evening to say he is on his way. We have told our little tales that made us all happy and time always passes faster when one is merry. Next spring we will begin our story telling sooner and all who care to come may join us."

The meadow folk did not want to leave Daddy Green Frog's house that last evening, but Fuzzy Caterpillar could not stay awake any longer, while Lazy Snail was so sleepy she could hardly drag her house after her. So bidding Daddy and Mamma Green Frog good-by, the meadow folk all scampered home.

Before long a blanket of snow lay on the ground, but under it the happy little meadow folk slept and dreamed of the happy days to come.

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